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Yugoslav Historian Vouches For Key Data on Waldheim

Reuter

BELGRADE, Feb. 1—A top Yugoslav military historian said today an original document alleged to implicate Austrian President Kurt Waldheim in World War II atrocities was in the Yugoslav archives.

Dusan Plenca said in an interview that he possessed photocopies of at least 30 documents bearing Waldheim's signature which implicated him in war crimes during savage fighting in Kozara mountains, central Yugoslavia, in the summer of 1942.

"No individual can hold the originals, because they are state property," Plenca said. "But anyone interested could find them in the archives. Waldheim pretends to have a short memory, but the documents clearly implicate him in genocide and he should defend himself in a court, not before a commission."

Waldheim has repeatedly denied being involved in crimes against civilians while serving with the German army in World War II.

Plenca spoke as West German historian Manfred Messerschmidt, a member of an Austrian government historians' commission probing Waldheim's wartime past, arrived in Yugoslavia to authenticate a key document published today by the West German magazine Der Spiegel.

The document is purported to be a telegram sent in July 1942 to a German group commander advising that Waldheim, then a German army lieutenant, sought the deportation of more than 4,000 Yugoslav civilians. Der Spiegel said the document had been discovered in a Zagreb archive by Plenca.

But a senior official in Zagreb's main archive said today that all the files seen by Plenca had been examined and the document had not been among them.

Asked whether he was ready to meet Messerschmidt, Plenca said: "Yes, I would like to face him in front of television cameras and show him my documents if he shows me his."